FT
MEADE

PZ 8
.A54
Zw
Copy 1

THE WILD SWANS

AND OTHER STORIES

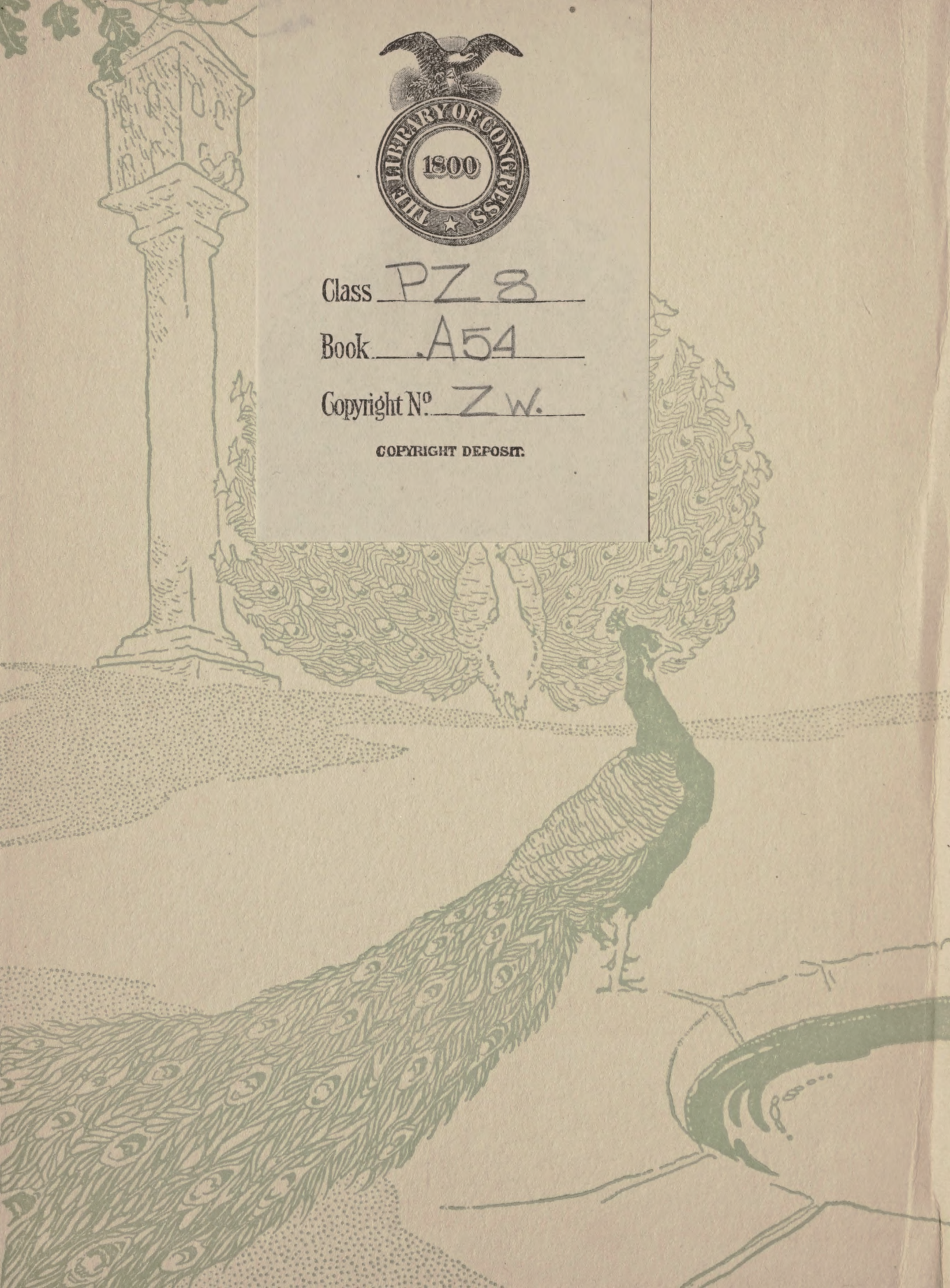
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

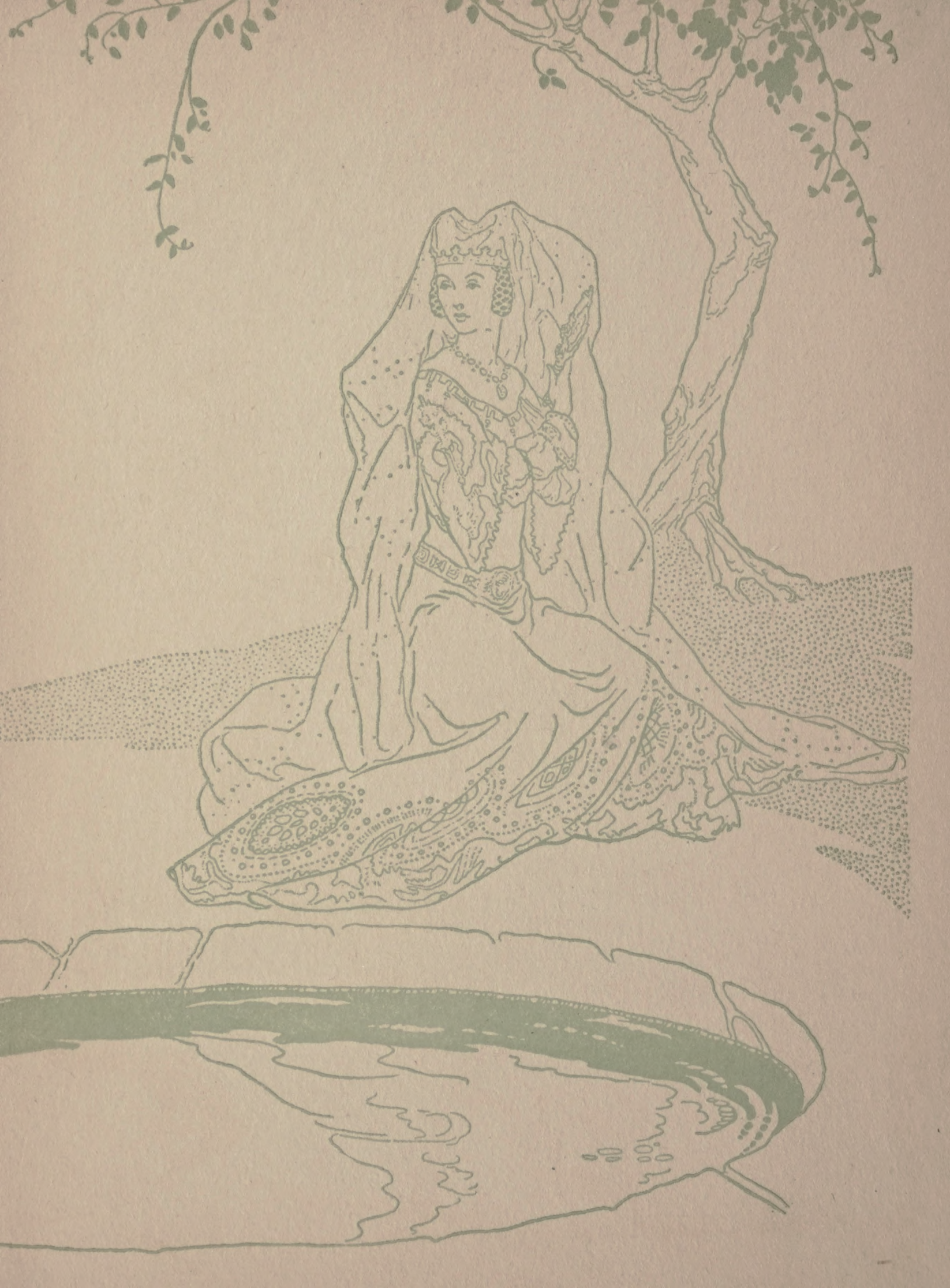
FT MEADE
GenColl

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

Class PZ8
Book .A54
Copyright No. Zw.

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.





© G.W. J. & CO.

The swans settled close by her

THE WILD SWANS AND OTHER STORIES

by Hans Christian Andersen

With illustrations in color
by Elenore Plaisted Abbott
And in black and white
by Edward Shenton

GEORGE W. JACOBS & COMPANY
Publishers Philadelphia

Copyright, 1922, by
GEORGE W. JACOBS & COMPANY

PZ8
.A54
N7

All rights reserved
Printed in U. S. A.

NOV 13 '22

©CLA703093

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE WILD SWANS	7
THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER . . .	31
THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-BUSH . . .	39
THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER . . .	44
THE BELL	80
THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SWEEP . .	89
THE ANGEL	97
THE STORKS	102
THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER . . .	111

ILLUSTRATIONS

The swans settled close to her . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"Tin soldier," said the goblin, "have the goodness to keep your eyes to yourself" . . . 32

Among the water-lilies lay a sleeping woman . . 44

The alder stump then began to move, for it was the Marsh King himself who lives in the bog . . 64

The poor boy had reached the same goal just as soon by his own road 80

At last they reached the top of the chimney and sat themselves down 90

The angel and the child 98

THE WILD SWANS

FAR away, where the swallows go in winter, lived a king who had eleven sons and one daughter, Elise. The eleven brothers—they were all princes—used to go to school with stars on their breasts and swords at their sides. They wrote upon golden slates with diamond pencils, and could read just as well without a book as with one, so there was no mistake about their being real princes. Their sister Elise sat upon a little footstool of looking-glass, and she had a picture-book which had cost the half of a kingdom. Oh, these children were very happy; but it was not to last thus forever.

Their father, who was king over all the land, married a wicked queen who was not at all kind to the poor children; they found that out on the first day. When the children wanted to play at having company, instead of having as many cakes and baked apples as they wanted, she would only let them have some sand in a teacup, and said they must make believe.

In the following week she sent little Elise into

the country to board with some peasants, and it did not take her long to make the king believe so many bad things about the boys, that he cared no more about them.

"Fly out into the world and look after yourselves," said the wicked queen; "you shall fly about like birds without voices."

But she could not make things as bad for them as she would have liked; they turned into eleven beautiful wild swans. They flew out of the palace window, right across the park and the woods.

It was very early in the morning when they came to the place where their sister Elise was sleeping in the peasant's house. They hovered over the roof of the house, turning and twisting their long necks, and flapping their wings; but no one either heard or saw them. They had to fly away again, and they soared up towards the clouds, far out into the wide world, and they settled in a big, dark wood, which stretched down to the shore.

Poor little Elise was in the peasant's room, playing with a green leaf, for she had no other toys. She made a little hole in it, which she looked through at the sun, and it seemed to her as if she saw her brothers' bright eyes. Every time

the warm sunbeams shone upon her cheek, it reminded her of their kisses. One day passed just like another. When the wind whistled through the rose-hedges outside the house, it whispered to the roses, "Who can be prettier than you are?" But the roses shook their heads and answered, "Elise!" And when the old woman sat in the doorway reading her Bible, the wind turned over the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" "Elise!" answered the book. Both the roses and the Bible only spoke the truth.

She was to go home when she was fifteen, but when the queen saw how pretty she was, she got very angry, and her heart was filled with hatred. She would willingly have turned her into a wild swan too, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do it at once, for the king wanted to see his daughter. The queen always went to the bath in the early morning. It was of marble and adorned with soft cushions and beautiful carpets.

She took three toads, kissed them, and said to the first, "Sit upon Elise's head when she comes to the bath, so that she may become stupid like yourself. Sit upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become ugly like you,

and then her father won't know her! Rest upon her heart," she whispered to the third. "Let an evil spirit come over her, which may be a burden to her." Then she put the toads into the clean water, and a green tinge immediately came over it. She called Elise, undressed her, and made her go into the bath; when she ducked under the water, one of the toads got among her hair, the other got on to her forehead, and the third on to her bosom. But when she stood up three scarlet poppies floated on the water; had not the toads been kissed by the queen, they would have been changed into crimson roses, but they became flowers from merely having rested a moment on the girl's head and her heart. She was far too good for the witchcraft to have any power over her. When the wicked queen saw this, she rubbed her over with walnut juice, and smeared her face with some evil-smelling salve. She also mussed up her beautiful hair, so it would have been impossible to recognize pretty Elise. When her father saw her, he said that she could not be his daughter. Nobody would have anything to say to her, except the dog in the yard, and the swallows, and they were poor dumb animals whose opinion went for nothing.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all lost. She crept sadly out of the palace and wandered about all day, over meadows and marshes, and into a big forest. She did not know in the least where she wanted to go, but she felt very sad, and longed for her brothers, who, no doubt, like herself had been driven out of the palace. She made up her mind to go and look for them, but she had only been in the wood for a short time when night fell. She had quite lost her way, so she lay down upon the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and rested her head on a little hillock. She dreamt about her brothers all night long.

When she woke the sun was already high. She could hear the splashing of water, for there were many springs around, which all flowed into a pond with a lovely sandy bottom. It was surrounded with thick bushes, but there was one place which the stags had trampled down and Elise passed through the opening to the waterside.

When she looked into the water and saw her own face she was quite frightened, it was so brown and ugly, but when she wet her little hand and rubbed her eyes and forehead, her white skin

shone through again. Then she took off all her clothes and went into the fresh water. A more beautiful child than she could not have been found in all the world.

When she had put on her clothes again, and plaited her long hair, she went to a sparkling spring and drank some of the water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered further into the wood, though where she was going she had not the least idea. She thought of her brothers, and she thought of a merciful God who would not forsake her. He let the wild crab-apples grow to feed the hungry. He showed her a tree, the branches of which were bending beneath their weight of fruit. Here she made her midday meal, and, having put props under the branches, she walked on into the thickest part of the forest. It was so quiet that she heard her own footsteps, she heard every little withered leaf which bent under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a ray of sunlight pierced the leafy branches. The solitude was such as she had never known before.

It was a very dark night, not a single glow-worm sparkled in the marsh; sadly she lay down to sleep, and it seemed to her as if the branches

above her parted asunder, and the Saviour looked down upon her with His loving eyes, and little angels' heads peeped out above His head and under His arms.

When she woke in the morning she was not sure if she had dreamt this, or whether it was really true.

She walked a little further, when she met an old woman with a basket full of berries, some of which she gave her. Elise asked if she had seen eleven princes ride through the wood. "No," said the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans, with golden crowns upon their heads, swimming in the stream close by there."

She led Elise a little further to a slope, at the foot of which the stream ran, and there Elise said good-by to the old woman, and walked along by the river till it flowed out into the great open sea.

The beautiful open sea lay before the maiden, but not a sail was to be seen on it, not a single boat. How was she ever to get any further? She looked at the numberless little pebbles on the beach; they were all worn quite round by the water. Glass, iron, stone, whatever was washed up, had taken their shapes from the water, which

yet was much softer than her little hand. "With all its rolling, it is untiring, and everything hard is smoothed down. I will be just as untiring! Thank you for your lesson, you clear rolling waves! Some time, so my heart tells me, you will bear me to my beloved brothers!"

Eleven white swans' feathers were lying on the seaweed; she picked them up and made a bunch of them. There were still drops of water on them. Whether these were dew or tears no one could tell. It was very lonely there by the shore, but she did not feel it, for the sea was ever-changing. There were more changes on it in the course of a few hours than could be seen on an inland fresh-water lake in a year. If a big black cloud arose, it was just as if the sea wanted to say, "I can look black too," and then the wind blew up and the waves showed their white crests. But if the clouds were red and the wind dropped, the sea looked like a rose-leaf, now white, now green. But, however still it was, there was always a little gentle motion just by the shore; the water rose and fell softly like the bosom of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to go down, Elise saw eleven wild swans with golden crowns upon

their heads flying towards the shore. They flew in a swaying line, one behind the other, like a white ribbon streamer. Elise climbed up onto the bank and hid behind a bush; the swans settled close by her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had sunk beneath the water the swans shed their feathers and became eleven handsome princes; they were Elise's brothers. Although they had altered a good deal, she knew them at once; she felt that they must be her brothers and she sprang into their arms, calling them by name. They were delighted when they recognized their little sister who had grown so big and beautiful. They laughed and cried, and told each other how wickedly their stepmother had treated them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "have to fly about as swans, as long as the sun is above the horizon. When it goes down we regain our human shapes. So we always have to look out for a resting place near sunset, for should we happen to be flying up among the clouds when the sun goes down, we should be hurled to the depths below. We do not live here; there is another land, just as beautiful as this, beyond the sea; but the way to it is very long and we

have to cross the mighty ocean to get to it. There is not a single island on the way where we can spend the night; only one solitary little rock just up above the water. It is only just big enough for us to stand upon close together, and if there is a heavy sea the water splashes over us, yet we thank our God for it. We stay there over night in our human forms, and without it we could never revisit our beloved home, for our flight takes two of the longest days in the year. We are only permitted to visit the home of our fathers once a year, and we dare only stay for eleven days. We hover over this big forest from whence we catch a glimpse of the palace where we were born, and where our father lives; beyond it we can see the high church towers where our mother is buried. The charcoal burners still sing the old songs we used to dance to when we were children. This is our home; we are drawn towards it, and here we have found you again, dear little sister! We may stay here two days longer, and then we must fly away again across the ocean, to a lovely country indeed, but it is not our own dear home! How shall we ever take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat!"

"How can I free you?" said their sister, and

they went on talking to each other nearly all night.

Elise was awakened in the morning by the rustling of the swans' wings above her; her brothers were again transformed and were wheeling round in great circles, till she lost sight of them in the distance. One of them, the youngest, stayed behind. He laid his head against her bosom, and she caressed it with her fingers. They remained together all day; towards evening the others came back, and as soon as the sun went down they took their natural forms.

"To-morrow we must fly away, and we dare not come back for a whole year, but we can't leave you like this! Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you over the forest, so surely our united strength ought to be sufficient to bear you across the ocean."

"Oh, yes! take me with you," said Elise.

They spent the whole night in weaving a kind of net of the elastic bark of the willow bound together with tough rushes; they made it both large and strong. Elise lay down upon it, and when the sun rose and the brothers became swans again, they took up the net in their bills and flew high up among the clouds with their precious

sister, who was fast asleep. The sunbeams fell straight on to her face, so one of the swans flew over her head so that its broad wings should shade her.

They were far from land when Elise woke; she thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to be carried through the air so high up above the sea. By her side lay a branch of beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of savory roots, which her younger brother had collected for her, and for which she gave him a grateful smile. She knew it was he who flew above her head shading her from the sun. They were so high up that the first ship they saw looked like a gull floating on the water.

They flew on and on all day like an arrow whizzing through the air, but they went slower than usual, for now they had their sister to carry. A storm came up, and night was drawing on; Elise saw the sun sinking with terror in her heart, for the solitary rock was nowhere to be seen. The swans seemed to be taking stronger strokes than ever; alas! she was the cause of their not being able to get on faster; as soon as the sun went down they would become men, and they would be hurled into the sea and drowned. She

prayed to God from the bottom of her heart, but still no rock was to be seen! Black clouds gathered, and flashes of lightning followed each other rapidly.

The sun was now at the edge of the sea. Elise's heart quaked, when suddenly the swans shot downwards so suddenly, that she thought they were falling, then they hovered again. Half of the sun was below the horizon, and there for the first time she saw the little rock below, which did not look bigger than the head of a seal above the water. The sun sank very quickly; it was no bigger than a star, but her foot touched solid earth. The sun went out like the last sparks of a bit of burning paper; she saw her brothers stand arm in arm around her, but there was only just room enough for them. The waves beat upon the rock, and washed over them like drenching rain. The heaven shone with continuous fire, and the thunder rolled, peal upon peal. But the sister and brothers held each other's hands and sang a psalm which gave them comfort and courage.

The air was pure and still at dawn. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew off with Elise, away from the islet. The sea still ran high; it

looked from where they were as if the white foam on the dark green water were millions of swans floating on the waves.

When the sun rose higher, Elise saw before her half floating in the air great masses of ice. Then she saw constant changes pass before her eyes, and presently the real land she was bound for. Beautiful blue mountains rose before her with their cedar woods and palaces. Long before the sun went down, she sat among the hills in front of a big cave covered with delicate green vines.

"Now we shall see what you will dream here to-night," said the youngest brother, as he showed her where she was to sleep.

"If only I might dream how I could free you," she said, and this thought filled her mind entirely. Then it seemed to her that a fairy came towards her; she was charming and brilliant, and yet she was very like the old woman who gave her the berries in the wood, and told her about the swans with the golden crowns.

"Your brothers can be freed," said the fairy, "but have you courage and endurance enough for it? The sea is indeed softer than your hands, and it molds the hardest stones, but it does not

feel the pain your fingers will feel. It has no heart, and does not suffer the pain and anguish you must feel. Do you see the stinging nettle I hold in my hand? Many of this kind grow round the cave where you sleep; only these and the ones which grow in the churchyards may be used. Mark that! Those you may pluck although they will burn and blister your hands. Crush the nettles with your feet and you will have flax, and of this you must weave eleven coats of mail with long sleeves. Throw these over the eleven wild swans and the charm is broken! But remember that from the moment you begin this work, till it is finished, even if it takes years, you must not utter a word! The first word you say will fall like a dagger into the hearts of your brothers. Their lives hang on your tongue. Mark this well!"

She touched her hand at the same moment; it was like burning fire, and woke Elise. It was bright daylight, and close to where she slept lay a nettle like those in her dream. She fell upon her knees with thanks to God and left the cave to begin her work.

She seized the horrid nettles with her delicate hands, and they burnt like fire; great blisters rose

on her hands and arms, but she suffered this willingly if only her task would free her beloved brothers. She crushed every nettle with her bare feet, and twisted it into green flax.

When the sun went down and the brothers came back, they were alarmed at finding her dumb; they thought it was some new witchcraft of their wicked stepmother. But when they saw her hands, they understood that it was for their sakes; the youngest brother wept, and wherever his tears fell, she felt no more pain, and the blisters disappeared.

She spent the whole night at her work, for she could not rest till she had freed her dear brothers. All the following day while her brothers were away she sat working, but never had the time flown so fast. One coat of mail was finished and she began the next. Then a hunting-horn sounded among the mountains; she was much frightened; the sound came nearer, and she heard dogs barking. In terror she rushed into the cave and tied the nettles she had collected and woven into a bundle upon which she sat.

At this moment a big dog bounded forward from the thicket, and another and another; they barked loudly and ran backwards and forwards.

In a few minutes all the huntsmen were standing outside the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the country. He stepped up to Elise; never had he seen so lovely a girl.

"How came you here, beautiful child?" he said.

Elise shook her head; she dared not speak; the freedom of her brothers depended upon her silence. She hid her hands under her apron, so that the king should not see what she suffered.

"Come with me!" he said; "you cannot stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silks and velvets, put a golden crown upon your head, and you shall live with me and have your home in my richest palace!" Then he lifted her upon his horse; she wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I only think of your happiness; you will thank me one day for what I am doing!" Then he darted off across the mountains, holding her before him on his horse, and the huntsmen followed.

When the sun went down, the royal city lay before them, and the king led her into the palace, where great fountains played in the marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were adorned with paintings, but she had no eyes for them, she only

wept; she allowed the women to dress her in royal robes, to twist pearls into her hair, and to draw gloves onto her blistered hands.

She was dazzlingly lovely as she stood there in all her magnificence; the courtiers bent low before her, and the king wooed her as his bride, although the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that he feared the beautiful wood maiden was a witch, who had dazzled their eyes and enchanted the king.

The king refused to listen to him; he ordered the music to play, the richest food to be brought, and the loveliest girls to dance before her. She was led through scented gardens into gorgeous apartments, but nothing brought a smile to her lips, or into her eyes. Last of all, the king opened the door of a little chamber close by the room where she was to sleep. It was adorned with costly green carpets, and made like an exact copy of the cave where he found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax she had spun from the nettles, and from the ceiling hung the shirt of mail which was already finished. One of the huntsmen had brought all these things away as curiosities.

"Here you may dream that you are back in

your former home!" said the king. "Here is the work upon which you were engaged; in the midst of your splendor, it may amuse you to think of those times."

When Elise saw all these things so dear to her heart, a smile for the first time played upon her lips, and the blood rushed back to her cheeks. She thought of the freeing of her brothers, and she kissed the king's hand; he pressed her to his heart, and ordered all the church bells to ring marriage peals. The lovely dumb girl from the woods was to be queen of the country.

The archbishop whispered evil words into the ear of the king, but they did not reach his heart. The wedding was to take place, and the archbishop himself had to put the crown upon her head. In his anger he pressed the golden circlet so tightly upon her head as to give her pain. But a heavier circlet pressed upon her heart, her grief for her brothers, so she thought nothing of the bodily pain. Her lips were sealed; a single word from her mouth would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes were full of love for the good and handsome king, who did everything he could to please her. Every day she grew more and more at-

tached to him, and longed to confide in him; but dumb she must remain. So at night she stole away from his side into her secret chamber, which was decorated like a cave, and here she knitted one shirt after another. When she came to the seventh, all her flax was worked up; she knew that these nettles which she was to use grew in the churchyard, but she had to pluck them herself. How was she to get there? With as much terror in her heart as if she were doing some evil deed, she stole down one night into the moonlit garden and out into the silent streets to the churchyard. It was very dark and lonely, but she picked the stinging nettles and hurried back to the palace with them.

Only one person saw her, but that was the archbishop, who watched while others slept. He thought that surely now the queen must be a witch, and had bewitched the king and all the people.

He told the king what he had seen and what he feared. Two big tears rolled down the king's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in his heart. He pretended to sleep at night, but no quiet sleep came to his eyes. He saw how Elise got up and went to her private room. Day by day his face

grew darker; Elise saw it but could not imagine what was the cause of it.

She had, however, almost reached the end of her labors; only one shirt of mail was lacking, but again she had no more flax and not a single nettle was left. Once more, for the last time, she must go to the churchyard to pluck a few handfuls.

Elise went, but the king and the archbishop followed her; they saw her disappear within the gate of the churchyard. The king was very sorrowful, because he thought she must surely be a witch.

"The people must judge her," he groaned; and the people judged. "Let her be burned in the glowing flames!"

She was led away from her beautiful apartments to a dark dungeon, with a grated window. Instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered to lay her head upon. The hard burning shirts of mail were to be her covering, but they could have given her nothing more precious.

She set to work again with many prayers to God.

Towards evening she heard the rustle of swans' wings close to her window; it was her youngest

brother; at last he had found her. He sobbed aloud with joy although he knew that the coming night might be her last, but then her work was almost done and her brothers were there.

The archbishop came to spend her last hours with her as he had promised the king. She shook her head at him, and by looks and gestures begged him to leave her. She had only this night in which to finish her work, or else all would be wasted, all—her pain, tears and sleepless nights. The archbishop went away with bitter words against her, but poor Elise knew that she was innocent, and she went on with her work.

The little mice ran about the floor bringing nettles to her feet, so as to give what help they could, and a thrush sat on the grating of the window where he sang all night, as merrily as he could to keep up her courage.

It was still only dawn, and the sun would not rise for an hour when the eleven brothers stood at the gate of the palace, begging to be taken to the king. This could not be done, was the answer, for it was still night; the king was asleep and no one dared wake him. All their entreaties and threats were useless; the watchmen turned out and even the king himself came to see what

was the matter; but just then the sun rose, and no more brothers were to be seen, only eleven wild swans hovering over the palace.

The whole city streamed out to see the witch burnt. A miserable horse drew the cart in which Elise was seated. They had put upon her a smock of green sacking, and all her beautiful long hair hung loose from her lovely head. Her cheeks were deathly pale, and her lips moved softly, while her fingers unceasingly twisted the green yarn. Even on the way to her death she could not abandon her unfinished work. Ten shirts lay completed at her feet—she labored away at the eleventh, amid the jeers of the crowd.

"Look at the witch how she mutters. She has not a book of psalms in her hands; no, there she sits with her witchcraft. Tear it away from her, into a thousand bits!"

The crowd pressed around her to destroy her work, but just then eleven wild swans flew down and perched upon the cart, flapping their wings. The crowd gave way before them in terror.

"It is a sign from Heaven! She is innocent!" they whispered, but they dared not say it aloud.

The executioner seized her by the hand, but she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans,

who were immediately changed to eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing in place of an arm, for one sleeve was wanting to his shirt of mail; she had not been able to finish it.

"Now I may speak! I am innocent."

The populace who saw what had happened bowed down before her as if she had been a saint, but she sank lifeless in her brother's arms; so great had been the strain, the terror and the suffering she had endured.

"Yes, innocent she is indeed," said the eldest brother, and he told them all that had happened.

Whilst he spoke a wonderful fragrance spread around, as of millions of roses. Every stick in the pile had taken root and shot out branches, and a great high hedge of red roses had arisen. At the very top was one pure white blossom; it shone like a star, and the king broke it off and laid it on Elise's bosom, and she woke with joy and peace in her heart.

All the church bells began to ring, and the singing birds flocked around them. Surely such a bridal procession went back to the palace as no king had ever seen before!

THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they were made from the same old tin spoon. Each man shouldered his gun, kept his eyes well to the front, and wore the smartest red and blue uniform imaginable. The first thing they heard in their new world, when the lid was taken off the box, was a little boy clapping his hands and crying, "Soldiers, soldiers!" It was his birthday and they had just been given to him; so he lost no time in setting them up on the table. All the soldiers were exactly alike except one, and he differed from the rest in having only one leg. For he was made last, and there was not quite enough tin left to finish him. However, he stood just as well on his one leg as the others on two; in fact, he was the very one who was to become famous. On the table where they were being set up were many other toys; but the chief thing which caught the eye was a delightful paper castle. You could see through the tiny windows, right into the rooms. Outside there were some little trees surrounding

a small mirror, representing a lake, whose surface reflected the waxen swans which were swimming about on it. It was altogether charming, but the prettiest thing of all was a little maiden standing at the open door of the castle. She, too, was cut out of paper, but she wore a dress of the lightest gauze, with a dainty little blue ribbon over her shoulders, by way of a scarf, set off by a brilliant spangle as big as her whole face. The little maid was stretching out both arms, for she was a dancer, and in the dance one of her legs was raised so high into the air that the tin soldier could see absolutely nothing of it, and supposed that she, like himself, had but one leg.

"That would be the very wife for me!" he thought; "but she is much too grand; she lives in a palace, while I only have a box, and then there are five and twenty of us to share it. No, that would be no place for her! but I must try to make her acquaintance!" Then he lay down full length behind a snuff-box, which stood on the table. From that point he could have a good look at the lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance.

Late in the evening the other soldiers were put into their box, and the people of the house went

TIN soldier, said the goblin, have the goodness to keep your eyes to yourself.

to bed. Now was the time for the toys to play; they amused themselves with paying visits, fighting battles, and giving balls. The tin soldiers rustled about in their box, for they wanted to join the games, but they could not get the lid off. The nut-crackers turned somersaults, and the pencil scribbled nonsense on the slate. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and joined in, but his remarks were in verse. The only two who did not move were the tin soldier and the little dancer. She stood as stiff as ever on tiptoe, with her arms spread out: he was equally firm on his one leg, and he did not take his eyes off her for a moment.

Then the clock struck twelve, when pop! up flew the lid of the snuff-box, but there was no snuff in it, no! There was a little black goblin, a sort of Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin soldier!" said the goblin, "have the goodness to keep your eyes to yourself."

But the tin soldier feigned not to hear.

"Ah! you just wait till to-morrow," said the goblin.

In the morning when the children got up they put the tin soldier on the window frame, and, whether it was caused by the goblin or by a puff

of wind, I do not know, but all at once the window burst open, and the soldier fell head foremost from the third story.

It was a terrific descent, and he landed at last, with his leg in the air, and rested on his cap, with his bayonet fixed between two paving-stones. The maid-servant and the little boy ran down at once to look for him; but although they almost trod on him, they could not see him. Had the soldier only called out, "Here I am," they would easily have found him, but he did not think it proper to shout when he was in uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a regular torrent. When it was over two street boys came along.

"Look out!" said one; "there is a tin soldier! He shall go for a sail."

So they made a boat out of a newspaper and put the soldier into the middle of it, and he sailed away down the gutter; both boys ran alongside clapping their hands. Good heavens! what waves there were in the gutter, and what a current, but then it certainly had rained cats and dogs. The paper boat danced up and down, and now and then whirled round and round. A shudder ran through the tin soldier, but he re-

mained undaunted, and did not move a muscle, only looked straight before him with his gun shouldered. All at once the boat drifted under a long wooden tunnel, and it became as dark as it was in his box.

"Where on earth am I going now?" thought he. "Well, well, it is all the fault of that goblin! Oh, if only the little maiden were with me in the boat it might be twice as dark for all I should care!"

At this moment a big water rat, who lived in the tunnnel, came up.

"Have you a pass?" asked the rat. "Hand up your pass!"

The tin soldier did not speak, but clung still tighter to his gun. The boat rushed on, the rat close behind. Phew, how he gnashed his teeth and shouted to the bits of stick and straw:

"Stop him, stop him, he hasn't paid his toll; he hasn't shown his pass!"

But the current grew stronger and stronger, the tin soldier could already see daylight before him at the end of the tunnel; but he also heard a roaring sound, fit to strike terror to the bravest heart. Just imagine! Where the tunnel ended the stream rushed straight into the big canal.

That would be just as dangerous for him as it would be for us to shoot a great rapid.

He was so near the end now that it was impossible to stop. The boat dashed out; the poor tin soldier held himself as stiff as he could; no one should say of him that he even winced.

The boat swirled round three or four times, and filled with water to the edge; it must sink. The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper. The paper became limper and limper, and at last the water went over his head—then he thought of the pretty little dancer, whom he was never to see again, and this refrain rang in his ears:

"Onward! Onward! Soldier!
For death thou canst not shun."

At last the paper gave way entirely and the soldier fell through—but at the same moment he was swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was inside the fish; it was worse than being in the tunnel even; and then it was so narrow! But the tin soldier was as dauntless as ever, and lay full length, shouldering his gun.

The fish rushed about and made the most fran-

tic movements. At last it became quite quiet, and after a time, a flash like lightning pierced it. The soldier was once more in the broad daylight, and some one called out loudly, "A tin soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to market, sold, and brought into the kitchen, where the cook cut it open with a large knife. She took the soldier up by the waist, with two fingers, and carried him into the parlor, where every one wanted to see the wonderful man, who had traveled about in the stomach of a fish; but the tin soldier was not at all proud. They set him up on the table, and, wonder of wonders! he found himself in the very same room that he had been in before. He saw the very same children, and the toys were still standing on the table, as well as the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancer.

She still stood on one leg, and held the other up in the air. You see she also was unbending. The soldier was so much moved that he was ready to shed tears of tin, but that would not have been fitting. He looked at her, and she looked at him, but they said never a word. At this moment one of the little boys took up the tin soldier, and without rhyme or reason, threw him into the fire. No doubt the little goblin in the snuff-box was to

blame for that. The tin soldier stood there, lighted up by the flame, and in the most horrible heat; but whether it was the heat of the real fire, or the warmth of his feelings, he did not know. He had lost all his gay color; it might have been from his perilous journey, or it might have been from grief, who can tell?

He looked at the little maiden, and she looked at him; and he felt that he was melting away, but he still managed to keep himself erect, shouldering his gun bravely.

A door was suddenly opened, the draught caught the little dancer and she fluttered like a sylph, straight into the fire, to the soldier, blazed up and was gone!

By this time the soldier was reduced to a mere lump, and when the maid took away the ashes next morning she found him, in the shape of a small tin heart. All that was left of the dancer was her spangle, and that was burned as black as a coal.

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-BUSH

AROUND a garden was a fence of hazel-bushes, and beyond that were fields and meadows, with cows and sheep; but in the center of the garden stood a Rose-bush in full bloom. Under it lay a Snail, who had a great deal in him, according to himself. "Wait till my time comes," said he; "I shall do a great deal more than to yield roses, or to bear nuts, or to give milk as cows do."

"I expect an immense deal from you," said Rose-bush. "May I ask when it is to come forth?"

"I shall take my time," replied the Snail. "You are always in such a hurry with your work, that curiosity about it is never excited."

The following year the Snail lay, almost in the same spot as formerly, in the sunshine under the Rose-bush; it was already in bud, and the buds had begun to expand into full-blown flowers, always fresh, always new. And the Snail crept half out, stretched forth its feelers, and then drew them in again.

"Everything looks just the same as last year; there is no progress to be seen anywhere. The Rose-bush is covered with roses—it will never get beyond that."

The summer passed, the autumn passed; the Rose-bush had yielded roses and buds up to the time that the snow fell. The weather became wet and tempestuous, the Rose-bush bowed down towards the ground, the Snail crept into the earth.

A new year commenced, the Rose-bush revived, and the Snail came forth again.

"You are now only an old stick of a Rose-bush," said he; "you must expect to wither away soon. You have given the world all that was in you. Whether that were worth much or not, is a question I have not time to take into consideration; but this is certain, that you have not done the least for your own improvement, else something very different might have been produced by you. Can you deny this? You will soon become only a bare stick. Do you understand what I say?"

"You alarm me," cried the Rose-bush. "I never thought of this."

"No, you have never troubled yourself with

thinking much. But have you not occasionally reflected why you blossomed, and in what way you blossomed—how in one way and not in another?"

"No," answered the Rose-bush; "I blossomed in gladness, for I could not do otherwise. The sun was so warm, the air so refreshing; I drank of the clear dew and the heavy rain; I breathed—I lived! There came up from the ground a strength to me, there came a strength from above. I experienced a degree of pleasure, always new, always great, and I was obliged to blossom. It was my life; I could not do otherwise."

"You have had a very easy life," remarked the Snail.

"To be sure, much has been granted to me," said the Rose-bush, "but no more will be bestowed on me now. *You* have one of those meditative, deeply thinking minds, one so endowed that you will astonish the world."

"I have by no means any such design," said the Snail. "The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have enough to do with myself, and enough in myself."

"But should we not in this earth all give our best assistance to others—contribute what we

can? Yes! I have only been able to give roses; but you—you who have got so much—what have you given to the world? What will you give it?"

"What have I given? What will I give? I spit upon it! It is good for nothing! I have no interest in it. Produce your roses—you cannot do more than that—let the hazel bushes bear nuts, let the cows give milk! You have each of you your public; I have mine within myself. I am going into myself, and shall remain there. The world is nothing to me."

And so the Snail withdrew into his house, and closed it up.

"What a sad pity it is!" exclaimed the Rose-bush. "I cannot creep into shelter, however much I might wish it. I must always spring out, spring out into roses. The leaves fall off, and they fly away on the wind. But I saw one of the roses laid in a psalm-book belonging to the mistress of the house; another of my roses was placed on the breast of a young and beautiful girl, and another was kissed by a child's soft lips in an ecstasy of joy. I was so charmed at all this: it was a real happiness to me—one of the pleasant remembrances of my life."

And the Rose-bush bloomed on in innocence,

while the Snail retired into his slimy house—the world was nothing to him!

Years flew on.

The Snail had returned to earth, the Rose-bush had returned to earth; also the dried rose-leaf in the psalm-book had disappeared, but new rose-bushes bloomed in the garden, and new snails were there; they crept into their houses, spitting —the world was nothing to them!

Shall we read their history too? It would not be different.

THE MARSH KING'S DAUGHTER

THE storks have a great many stories, which they tell their little ones, all about the bogs and the marshes. We all know one of the two oldest tales which have been kept up among the storks; the one about Moses, who was placed by his mother on the waters of the Nile, and found there by the king's daughter.

The other story is not known yet, because the storks have kept it among themselves. It has been handed on from one mother stork to another for more than a thousand years, and each succeeding mother has told it better and better.

The first pair of storks who told it, and who actually lived it, had their summer quarters on the roof of the Viking's timbered house up by "Vidmosen" (the Wild Bog) in Wendsyssel. It is in the north of Jutland. There is still a great bog there. This district used to be under the sea, but the ground has risen, and it stretches for miles. It is surrounded on every side by marshy meadows, quagmires, and peat bogs, on which grow cloud berries and stunted bushes. There is nearly always a damp mist hanging over

© G.W. J. & CO.

Among the water-lilies lay a sleeping woman

it, and seventy years ago it was still overrun with wolves. It may well be called the Wild Bog, and one can easily imagine how desolate and dreary it was among all these swamps and pools a thousand years ago. In detail everything is much the same now as it was then. The reeds grow to the same height, and have the same kind of long purple-brown leaves with feathery tips. The birch still grows there with its white bark and its delicate, loosely-hanging leaves. With regard to living creatures, the flies still wear their gauzy draperies of the same cut; and the storks now, as then, still dress in black and white, with long red stockings. The people certainly then had a very different cut for their clothes than at the present day; but if any of them, farmer or huntsman, or anybody at all stepped on the quag-mires, the same fate befell him a thousand years ago as would overtake him now if he ventured on them—in he would go, and down he would sink to the Marsh King, as they call him. He rules down below over the whole kingdom of bogs and swamps.

Near the bogs lay the timbered hall of the Vikings, with its stone cellar, its tower, and its three stories. The storks had built their nest on

the top of the roof, and the mother stork was sitting on the eggs which she was quite sure would soon be successfully hatched.

One evening father stork stayed out rather late, and when he came back he looked somewhat ruffled.

"I have something terrible to tell you!" he said to the mother stork.

"Don't tell it to me then," she answered; "remember that I am sitting; it might upset me and that would be bad for the eggs!"

"You will have to know it," said he; "she has come here, the daughter of our host in Egypt. She has ventured to take the journey and now she has disappeared."

"She who is related to the fairies! Tell me all about it. You know I can't bear to be kept waiting now I am sitting."

"Look here, mother! She must have believed what the doctor said, as you told me; she believed that the marsh flowers up here would do something for her father, and she flew over here in feather plumage with the other two Princesses, who have to come north every year to take the baths to make themselves young. She came, and she has vanished."

"You go into too many particulars," said the mother stork; "the eggs might get a chill, and I can't stand being kept in suspense."

"I have been on the outlook," said father stork, "and to-night when I was among the reeds where the quagmire will hardly bear me, I saw three swans flying along, and there was something about their flight which said to me, 'Watch them; they are not real swans! They are only in swan's plumage.'"

"But about the Princess," said mother stork; "I am tired of hearing about swan's plumage."

"You know that in the middle of the bog there is a kind of lake," said father stork. "Well, there was a big alder stump between the bushes and the quagmire, and on this the three swans settled, flapping their wings and looking about them. Then one of them threw off the swan's plumage, and I at once recognized in her our Princess from Egypt. There she sat with no covering but her long black hair; I heard her beg the two others to take good care of the swan's plumage while she dived under the water to pick up the marsh flower which she thought she could see. They nodded and raised their heads, and

lifted up the loose plumage. They flew up into the air with the feather garment! 'Just you duck down,' they cried. 'Never again will you fly about in the guise of a swan; never more will you see the land of Egypt; you may sit in your swamp.' Then they tore the feather garment into a hundred bits, scattering the feathers all over the place, like a snowstorm; then away flew those two good-for-nothing Princesses."

"What a terrible thing," said mother stork; "but I must have the end of it."

"The Princess moaned and wept! Her tears trickled down upon the alder stump, and then it began to move, for it was the Marsh King himself, who lives in the bog. I saw the stump turn round, and saw that it was no longer a stump; it stretched out long miry branches like arms. The poor child was terrified, and she sprang away on to the shaking quagmire where it would not even bear my weight, far less hers. She sank at once and the alder stump after her; it was dragging her down. Great black bubbles rose in the slime, and then there was nothing more to be seen. Now she is buried in the Wild Bog, and never will she take back to Egypt the flowers she came for.

"I mean to keep a watch, though, every day," said the stork, and he kept his word.

But a long time passed, and then one day he saw that a green stem shot up from the depths, and when it reached the surface of the water, a leaf appeared at the top which grew broader and broader. Next a bud appeared close by it, and one morning at dawn, just as the stork was passing, the bud opened out in the warm rays of the sun, and in the middle of it lay a lovely baby, a little girl, looking just as fresh as if she had just come out of a bath. She was so exactly like the Princess from Egypt that at first the stork thought it was she who had grown small; but when he put two and two together, he came to the conclusion that it was her child and the Marsh King's. This explained why she appeared in a water-lily. "She can't stay there very long," thought the stork; "and there are too many of us in my nest as it is, but an idea has just come into my head! The Viking's wife has no child, and she has often wished for one. As I am always said to bring the babies, this time I will do so in earnest. I will fly away to the Viking's wife with the baby, and that will indeed be a joy for her."

So the stork took up the little girl and flew away with her to the timbered house where he picked a hole in the bladder skin which covered the window, and laid the baby in the arms of the Viking's wife. This done, he flew home and told the mother stork all about it; and the young ones heard what he said.

"So you see that the Princess is not dead; she must have sent the baby up here, and I have found a home for her."

"I said so from the very first," said mother stork; "now just give a little attention to your own children, it is almost time to start on our own journey. I feel a tingling in my wings every now and then! The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I hear from the quails that we shall soon have a good wind."

How delighted the Viking's wife was when she woke in the morning and found the little baby on her bosom. She kissed and caressed it; but it screamed and kicked terribly, and seemed anything but happy. At last it cried itself to sleep, and as it lay there a prettier little thing could not have been seen. The Viking's wife was delighted; body and soul were filled with joy. She was sure that now her husband and all his men

would soon come back as unexpectedly as the baby had come. So she busied herself in putting the house in order for their return. When evening came she was very tired and slept soundly. When she woke towards morning she was much alarmed at finding that the little baby had disappeared. She sprang up and lighted a pine chip and looked about. There was no baby, but at the foot of the bed sat a hideous toad. She was frightened at the sight, and seized a heavy stick to kill it, but it looked at her with such curious sad eyes, that she had not the heart to strike it. Once more she looked round, and the toad gave a faint pitiful croak which made her start. She jumped out of bed and threw open the window shutter; the sun was just rising and its beams fell upon the bed and the great toad. All at once the toad's wide mouth seemed to shut, and to become small and rosy, the limbs stretched and again took their lovely shapes, and it was her own dear little baby which lay there, and not a hideous frog.

"Whatever is this?" she cried; "I have had a bad dream. This is my own darling child." She kissed it, and pressed it to her heart, but it struggled and bit like a wild kitten.

In the course of a few days and nights it became clear to the Viking's wife how matters stood with her little baby; some magic power had a terrible hold over her. In the daytime it was as beautiful as any fairy, but it had a bad, wicked temper; at night, on the other hand, she became a hideous toad, quiet and pathetic, with sad, mournful eyes. There were two natures in her, both in soul and body, continually shifting. The reason of it was that the little girl brought by the frog, by day had her mother's form and her father's evil nature; but at night she had his form and her mother's sweet nature and gentle spirit. Who could release her from the power of this witchcraft? The Viking's wife knew that she would never dare tell her husband the true state of affairs, because he would without doubt have the poor child exposed on the highway for any one who chose to look after it. The good woman had not the heart to do this, and so she determined that he should only see the child by broad daylight.

One morning there was a sound of storks' wings swishing over the roof; during the night more than a hundred pairs of storks had made it their resting-place, and they were now trying

their wings before starting on their long southward flight.

"Every man ready!" they cried; "all the wives and children too."

Then away they flew.

At the very same moment a horn sounded. The Viking had landed with all his men; they were bringing home no end of rich booty.

The Viking went out once more that year on a raid, although the autumn winds were beginning; he sailed with his men to the coast of Britain. But his wife remained at home with the little girl, and the foster-mother soon grew fonder of the poor toad with the pathetic eyes than she was of the little beauty who tore and bit.

Winter was on its way. The sparrows took the storks' nest under their protection.

The storks were in the land of Egypt under such a sun as we have on a warm summer's day! There was sunshine every day, and plenty to eat; nothing to think of but pleasure!

But in the great palace of the Egyptian king matters were not so pleasant. The rich and mighty lord lay stretched upon his couch. The healing marsh flower from the northern lands, which was to be found and plucked by the one

who loved him best, would never be brought. His young and lovely daughter, who in the plumage of a swan had flown over sea and land to the far north, would never return. The two other swan Princesses had come back, and this is the tale they told:

"We were all flying high up in the air when a huntsman saw us and shot his arrow; it pierced our sister to the heart and she slowly sank. As she sank she sang her farewell song and fell into the midst of a forest pool. Never more will she come back to the land of Egypt."

Then they both wept, and the father stork who heard it clattered with his beak and said, "Pack of lies; I should like to drive my beak right into their breasts!"

The stork knew what a misfortune it was to the whole country that the king should be lying sick. "But where blossoms the flower of healing for him?" the people asked of one another, and all were agreed that aid must come through the Princess who loved her father with her whole heart and soul. It was more than a year and a day since they had sent her at night out into the desert to the Sphinx, where it would be revealed to her where she would find healing for her father.

This she had done, and the spot had been shown her in dreams where in the depths of the swamp she would find the lotus flower that would touch her bosom beneath the water. And this she was to bring home. So she flew away in her swan's plumage to the Wild Bog in the far north.

Now all this the father and mother stork had known from the beginning, and we know that the Marsh King had dragged her down to himself.

"I think I will snatch away the swans' plumage from the two deceitful Princesses," said the father stork. "Then they cannot go to the Wild Bog to do any more mischief."

"Where will you keep them?" asked the mother stork.

"In our nest at the Wild Bog," said he. "The young ones and I can carry them between us, and if they are too heavy, there are places enough on the way where we can hide them till our next flight."

In the meantime the little child in the Viking's hall by the Wild Bog, whither the storks flew in the spring, had had a name given her; it was Helga, but such a name was far too gentle for such a wild spirit as hers. The little child grew

to be a lovely maiden of sixteen, but wilder than most, even in those wild times.

She rode a horse bare-backed as if she were a part of it, nor did she jump off while her steed bit and fought with the other wild horses. She would often throw herself from the cliff into the sea in all her clothes, and swim out to meet the Viking when his boat neared the shore; and she cut off the longest strand of her beautiful hair to string her bow.

The Viking's wife, though strong-willed, became towards her daughter like any other mother, because she knew that a spell rested over the child.

One bond always held Helga in check, and that was twilight; when it drew near, she became quiet. She would go towards her mother, and when the sun sank she would sit sad and quiet, shriveled up into the form of a toad. Her body was now much bigger than those creatures ever are, but for that reason all the more unsightly. She looked like a wretched dwarf with the head of a frog and webbed fingers. There was something very piteous in her eyes; and her voice was only a hollow croak like the smothered sobs of a dreaming child. Then the Viking's wife would

take it on her knee, and looking into its eyes would forget the misshapen form, and would say, "I could almost wish that thou wouldst always remain my dumb frog child. Thou art more terrible to look at when thou art clothed in beauty."

"One would never think that she had been small enough to lie in a water-lily!" said the father stork. "Now she is grown up, and the very image of her Egyptian mother, whom we never saw again! I have been flying across the marsh year in, year out, and never have I seen a trace of her. I have spent many a night flying about like an owl or a bat scanning the open water, but all to no purpose. Nor have we had any use for the two swan plumages which the young ones and I dragged up here with so much difficulty. They have lain for years in the bottom of the nest."

The Viking came home early that autumn with his booty and prisoners; among these was a young Christian priest, one of those men who opposed the heathen gods of the north.

The young priest was imprisoned in the deep stone cellars of the timber house, and his feet and hands were bound with strips of bark. The Viking's wife felt pity for him, but young Helga proposed that he should be treated in a cruel way.

When the night came, however, and the girl's beauty of body and soul changed places, the Viking's wife spoke tender words of grief from her sorrowful heart. The ugly toad with its ungainly body stood fixing its sad brown eyes upon her, listening and seeming to understand with the mind of a human being.

" Never once to my husband has a word of my double grief through you passed my lips," said the Viking's wife. " My heart is full of grief for you, great is a mother's love! But love never entered your heart; it is like a lump of cold clay. How ever did you get into my house? "

Then the ungainly creature trembled, as if the words touched some invisible chord between body and soul, and great tears came into its eyes.

"A bitter time will come to you," said the Viking's wife, " and it will be a terrible one to me too! Better would it have been if, as a child, you had been exposed on the highway, and lulled by the cold to the sleep of death! " And the Viking's wife shed bitter tears, and went away in anger and sorrow, passing under the curtain of skins which hung from the beams and divided the hall.

The shriveled up toad crouched in the corner,

and a dead silence reigned. At intervals a half-stifled sigh rose within her; it was as if in anguish something came to life in her heart. She took a step forward and listened, then she stepped forward again and grasped the heavy bar of the door with her clumsy hands. Softly she drew it back, and silently lifted the latch, then she took up the lamp which stood in the room. It seemed as if a strong power gave her strength. She drew out the iron bolt from the barred cellar door, and slipped in to the prisoner. He was asleep; she touched him with her cold, clammy hand, and when he awoke and saw the hideous creature, he shuddered as if he beheld an evil ghost. She drew out her knife and cut his bonds and then beckoned him to follow her.

The toad led him behind the sheltering curtains down a long passage to the stable, pointed to a horse, on to which he sprang and she after him. She sat in front of him, clutching the mane of the animal. The prisoner understood her, and they rode at a quick pace along a path he never would have found. He forgot her hideous form, and prayed and sang holy songs which made her tremble. She wanted to stop and jump off the horse, but the priest held her tightly, and sang

aloud a psalm as if this could lift the spell upon her.

The horse bounded on, the sky grew red, and the first sunbeams pierced the clouds. As the stream of light touched her, the transformation took place. She was once more a lovely maiden, but her wild spirit was the same. The priest held a girl in his arms, and he was terrified at the sight. He stopped the horse and sprang down, thinking he had met with a new trick of the evil one. But Helga sprang to the ground too. The short child's frock only reached to her knee. She tore the sharp knife from her belt and rushed upon the startled man. "Let me get at thee!" she cried, "let me reach thee, and my knife shall pierce thee! Thou art ashen pale, thou slave!"

They wrestled together, but an invisible power seemed to give strength to the Christian; he held her tight, and the old oak under which they stood seemed to help him, for the loosened roots above the ground tripped her up. Close by rose a bubbling spring, and he sprinkled her with water and commanded the unclean spirit to leave her, making the sign of the cross over her according to Christian custom. Her arms fell, and she looked with astonishment and paling cheeks at this man

who seemed to be a mighty magician skilled in secret arts. She trembled now as he traced the sign of the cross upon her forehead and bosom, and sat before him with drooping head like a wild bird tamed.

He spoke gently to her about the deed of love she had done for him this night, when she came in the hideous shape of a toad, cut his bands, and led him out to light and life. She herself was bound, he said, and with stronger bonds than his; but she also, through him, should reach to light and life everlasting. He would take her to Hedeby, to the holy Ansgarius, and there, in that Christian city, the spell would be removed.

He knelt down and prayed humbly and earnestly. It seemed as if the quiet wood became a holy church. The birds began to sing as if they too were also of this new congregation, and the fragrance of the wild flowers was like the perfume of incense.

While he spoke the horse which had carried them stood quietly by, only rustling among the bramble-bushes, making the ripe, juicy fruit fall into little Helga's hands, as if inviting her to refresh herself. Patiently she allowed herself to be lifted on to the horse's back. The priest

bound together two branches in the shape of a cross, which he held aloft in his hand as he rode through the wood. The brushwood grew thicker and thicker, till at last it became a trackless wilderness.

Towards evening they met a band of robbers.

"Where hast thou stolen this beautiful child?" they cried, stopping the horse and pulling down the two riders.

The priest had no weapon but the knife which he had taken from little Helga, and with this he struck out right and left. One of the robbers raised his ax to strike him, but the Christian sprang to one side. The blade flew into the horse's neck, so that the blood gushed forth, and it fell to the ground dead. Then little Helga rushed forward and threw herself on to the horse. The priest placed himself in front of her as a shield, but one of the robbers swung his iron club with such force at his head that the priest was knocked to the ground, dead.

The robbers seized little Helga, but the sun was just going down, and as the last rays vanished she was changed into the form of a frog. A greenish-white mouth stretched half over her face; her arms became thin and slimy; while

broad hands, with webbed fingers, spread themselves out like fans. The robbers in terror let her go, and she stood among them a hideous monster; and, according to frog nature, she bounded away with great leaps, and disappeared in the thicket. Then the robbers thought this must be some witchcraft, and hurried away in fear.

The full moon had risen when poor little Helga, in the form of a frog, crept out of the thicket. She stopped by the body of the priest and the dead horse; she looked at them with eyes which seemed to weep; a sob came from the toad like that of a child bursting into tears. She fetched fresh water and washed the face of the dead man, and strewed fresh green leaves over it. She also brought large boughs to cover him, and scattered dried leaves between the branches. Then she brought the heaviest stones she could carry, and laid them over the dead body, filling up the spaces with moss. Now she thought the mound was strong and safe enough, but the task had taken the whole night; the sun was just rising, and there stood little Helga in all her beauty with bleeding hands and maidenly tears for the first time on her cheeks.

It was as if two natures were struggling in

her; she trembled and glanced round as if she were just waking from a troubled dream. She leaned for support against a slender beech, and at last climbed to the topmost branches like a cat, and seated herself firmly upon them. She sat there the whole day, like a frightened squirrel in the wood where all is still and dead.

When the evening drew near and the sun began to sink, she roused. She slipped down gently from the tree, and when the last sunbeam was gone she sat there once more, the shriveled up frog with her torn, webbed hands; but her eyes now shone with a new beauty which they had hardly owned in all the pride of her loveliness. They were the gentlest and tenderest maiden's eyes which now shone out of the face of the frog. And the beautiful eyes overflowed with tears, weeping precious drops that lightened the heart.

The cross made of branches still lay by the priest's grave. Little Helga took it up and placed it between the stones which covered man and horse. Her tears burst forth, and in this mood she traced the same sign in the earth round the grave—and as she formed with both hands the sign of the cross, the webbed skin fell away from her fingers like a torn glove. She washed

THE alder stump then began to move, for it was the Marsh King himself who lives in the bog

her hands at the spring, and gazed in astonishment at their delicate whiteness. Again she made the holy sign in the air, between herself and the dead man; her lips trembled, her tongue moved, and the name which she in her ride through the forest had so often heard, rose to her lips, and she uttered the words "Jesus Christ."

The frog's skin fell away from her, she was the beautiful young maiden, but her head bent wearily and her limbs required rest. She slept. But her sleep was short; she was awakened at midnight; before her stood the dead horse prancing and full of life. Close by his side appeared the Christian priest.

There was such earnestness in his large eyes that little Helga trembled. Every kindness which had ever been shown her, every loving word which had been said to her, came vividly before her.

The priest lifted her up on to the horse, and gave her a golden censer like those she had seen in the Viking's hall. A fragrant perfume arose from it. He took the cross from the grave, holding it high above him, while they rode rapidly through the air.

Away they flew over wood and heath, rivers

and pools, up north towards the Wild Bog. The priest raised high the cross, it shone like gold, and his lips chanted a hymn. Little Helga sang with him as a child joins in its mother's song. She swung the censer and from it issued a perfume so strong and so wonder-working that the reeds and rushes burst into blossom, and flower stems shot up from the bottomless depths. The water-lilies spread themselves over the surface of the pool like a carpet, and on this carpet lay a sleeping woman. She was young and beautiful; little Helga thought she saw herself, her picture mirrored in the quiet pool. It was her mother she saw, the wife of the Marsh King, the princess from the river Nile.

The priest ordered that the sleeping woman be lifted up on to the horse, and all three rode on through the air to dry ground. Just then the cock crew from the Viking's hall, and the vision melted away in the mist which was driven along by the wind, but mother and daughter stood side by side.

"Is it myself I see reflected in the deep water?" said the mother.

"Do I see myself mirrored in a bright shield?" said the daughter. But as they ap-

proached and clasped each other heart to heart, the mother's heart beat the fastest, and she understood.

"My child! my own heart's blossom! my lotus out of the deep waters!" and she wept over her daughter; her tears were a new baptism of love and life for little Helga. "I came hither in a swan's plumage, and here I threw it off," said the mother. "I sank down into the bog, which closed around me. Some power always dragged me down, deeper and deeper. I felt the hand of sleep pressing upon my eyelids. I fell asleep, and I dreamt—I seemed to be again in the vast Egyptian Pyramid; out walked the mummy king of a thousand years ago, black as pitch, black as the shining wood-snail or the slimy mud of the swamp. Whether it were the Mummy King or the Marsh King I knew not. He threw his arms around me, and I felt that I must die. When life came back to me I felt something warm upon my bosom; a little bird fluttering its wing and twittering. It flew from my bosom high up towards the heavy dark canopy, but a long green ribbon still bound it to me; I heard and understood its notes of longing: 'Freedom! Sunshine! To the Father!' I remembered my

own father in the sunlit land of my home, my life, and my love! and I loosened the ribbon and let it flutter away—home to my father. Since that hour I have dreamt no more; I must have slept a long and heavy sleep till this hour, when sweet music and fragrant odors awoke me and set me free."

While they stood there pressed heart to heart the stork was wheeling above their heads in great circles; at length he flew away to his nest, and brought back the swan plumages so long kept there. He threw one over each of them; the feathers closed over them closely, and mother and daughter rose into the air as two white swans.

"Now let us talk!" said the father stork; "for we can understand each other's language, even if one sort of bird has a different shaped beak from another. It is the most fortunate thing in the world that you appeared this evening. To-morrow we should have been off, mother and I and the young ones. We are going to fly southwards. Yes, you may look at me! I am an old friend from the Nile, so is mother too; her heart is not so sharp as her beak! She always said that the Princess would take care of herself! I and the young ones carried the swans' plumage up

here! How delighted I am, and how lucky it is that I am still here; as soon as the day dawns we will set off, a great company of storks. We will fly in front; you had better follow us, and then you won't lose your way, and we will keep an eye upon you."

"And the lotus flower which I was to take with me," said the Egyptian Princess, "flies by my side in a swan's plumage. I take the flower of my heart with me, and so the riddle is solved. Now for home! home!"

But Helga said she could not leave the Danish land without seeing her loving foster-mother once more, the Viking's wife. For in Helga's memory now rose up every happy recollection, every tender word, and every tear her foster-mother had shed over her, and it almost seemed as if she loved this mother best.

"Yes, we must go to the Viking's hall," said the father stork; "mother and the young ones are waiting for us there. How they will open their eyes and flap their wings! Now I will make a great clattering to let them know we are coming!"

So he clattered with his beak, and he and the swans flew off to the Viking's hall.

They all lay in a deep sleep within; the Viking's wife had gone late to rest, for she was in great anxiety about little Helga, who had not been seen for three days. She had disappeared with the Christian priest, and she must have helped him away; it was her horse which was missing from the stable. She had a dream, and in her dream little Helga sat close beside her, crouching on the floor in the form of the hideous frog. She trembled and crept closer to her foster-mother who took her on her knee, and in her love pressed her to her bosom, notwithstanding the hideous frog's skin. And the air resounded with the clashing of sword and club, and the whistling of arrows as though a fierce hailstorm were passing over them. Then the Viking's wife saw the face of the Christian priest, their prisoner. "White Christ," she cried aloud, and as she named the name she pressed a kiss upon the forehead of the loathsome toad; the frog's skin fell away, and before her stood little Helga in all the radiance of her beauty, gentle as she had never been before, and with beaming eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, and blessed her for all the care and love she had shown in the days of her trial and misery. Little Helga rose

up as a great white swan and spread her wings, with the rushing sound of a flock of birds of passage on the wing.

The Viking's wife was awakened by the rushing sound of wings outside; she knew it was the time when the storks took their flight, and it was these she heard. She wanted to see them once more and to bid them farewell, so she got up and went out on to the balcony; she saw stork upon stork sitting on the roofs of the outbuildings round the courtyard, and flocks of them were flying round and round in great circles. Just in front of her, on the edge of the well where little Helga so often had frightened her with her wildness, sat two white swans, who gazed at her with their wise eyes. Then she remembered her dream, which still seemed quite real to her. She thought of little Helga in the form of a swan. She thought of the Christian priest, and suddenly a great joy arose in her heart. The swans flapped their wings and bent their heads as if to greet her, and the Viking's wife stretched out her arms towards them as if she understood all about it, and she smiled at them with tears in her eyes.

"We are not going to wait for the swans," said the mother stork; "if they want to travel

with us they must come. We can't dawdle here till the plovers start! It is very nice to travel as we do, the whole family together, not like the chaffinches and the ruffs, when the males and females fly separately; it's hardly decent! And why are those swans flapping their wings like that?"

"Well, every one flies in his own way," said the father stork. "The swans fly in an oblique line, the cranes in the form of a triangle, and the plovers in a curved line like a snake."

"Don't talk about snakes while we are flying up here," said the mother stork. "It puts desires into the young one's heads which they can't gratify."

"Are those the high mountains I used to hear about?" asked Helga in the swan's plumage.

"Those are thunder clouds driving along beneath us," said her mother.

"What are those white clouds that rise so high?" again enquired Helga.

"Those are mountains covered with perpetual snows that you see yonder," said her mother, as they flew across the Alps down towards the blue Mediterranean.

"Africa's land! Egypt's strand!" said the

daughter of the Nile in her joy, as from far above in her swan's plumage her eye fell upon the narrow waving yellow line, her birthplace. The other birds saw it too, and hastened their flight.

"I smell the Nile mud and the frogs," said the mother stork. "I am tingling all over. Now, you will have something nice to taste, and something to see too. There are the marabouts, the ibis, and the crane."

"The storks have come back," was said in the great house on the Nile, where its lord lay in the hall on his downy cushions covered with a leopard skin, scarcely alive, and yet not dead either, waiting and hoping for the lotus flower from the deep bog in the north.

Relatives and servants stood round his couch, when two great white swans who had come with the storks flew into the hall. They threw off their dazzling plumage, and there stood two beautiful women as like each other as twin drops of dew. They bent over the pale withered old man, throwing back their long hair.

As little Helga bent over her grandfather, the color came back to his cheeks, and new life returned to his limbs. The old man rose with

health and energy renewed; his daughter and granddaughter clasped him in their arms, as if with a joyous morning greeting after a long troubled night.

Joy reigned through the house and in the stork's nest too, but there the rejoicing was chiefly over the abundance of food, especially the swarms of frogs.

Early in the spring, when the storks were again about to take flight to the north, little Helga took off her gold bracelet, and, scratching her name on it, beckoned to father stork and put it round his neck. She told him to take it to the Viking's wife, who would see by it that her foster-daughter still lived, was happy, and had not forgotten her.

"It is a heavy thing to carry!" thought father stork, as it slipped on to his neck; "but neither gold nor honor are to be thrown upon the highway! The stork brings good luck, they say up there!"

The little nightingale singing in the tamarind bushes was also going north soon; Helga had often heard it singing by the Wild Bog, so she determined to send a message by it too. She knew the bird language from having worn a

swan's plumage, and she had kept it up by speaking to the storks and the swallows. The nightingale understood her quite well, so she begged it to fly to the beech-wood in Jutland, where she had made the grave of stones and branches; she bade it tell all the other little birds to guard the grave and to sing over it. The nightingale flew away.

In the autumn an eagle perched on one of the Pyramids saw a gorgeous train of heavily-laden camels, and men clad in armor riding fiery Arab steeds as white as silver with quivering red nostrils and flowing manes reaching to the ground. A royal prince from Arabia, as handsome as a prince should be, was arriving at the stately mansion where now the storks' nest stood empty; its inhabitants were still in their northern home; but they would soon now return—nay, on the very day when the rejoicings were at their height they returned. They were bridal festivities, and little Helga was the bride, clad in rich silk and many jewels. The bridegroom was the young prince from Arabia, and they sat together at the upper end of the table between her mother and her grandfather.

But Helga was not looking at the bride-

groom's handsome face round which his black beard curled, nor did she look into his fiery dark eyes which were fixed upon hers. She was gazing up at a brilliant twinking star which was beaming in the heavens.

Just then there was a rustle of great wings in the air outside; the storks had come back. And the old couple, tired as they were and needing rest, flew straight down to the railing of the veranda; they knew nothing about the festivities. They had heard on the frontiers of the country that little Helga had had them painted on the wall, for they belonged to the story of her life.

"It was prettily done of her," said father stork.

"It is little enough," said mother stork; "they could hardly do less."

When Helga saw them she rose from the table and went out on to the veranda to stroke their wings. The old storks bowed their heads, and the very youngest ones looked on and felt honored. And Helga looked up at the shining star, which seemed to grow brighter and purer; between herself and the star floated a form purer even than the air, and therefore visible to her. It floated quite close to her, and she saw that it

was the priest; he also had come to her great festival—come even from the heavenly kingdom.

"The glory and bliss yonder, far outshines these earthly splendors," he said.

Little Helga prayed more earnestly and meekly than she had ever done before, that for one single moment she might gaze into the kingdom of Heaven. Then she felt herself lifted up above the earth in a stream of sweet sounds and thoughts. The unearthly music was not only around her, it was within her. No words can express it.

"Now we must return; you will be missed," said the priest.

"Only one glance more," she pleaded; "only one short moment more."

"We must return to earth; the guests are departing."

"Only one look—the last."

Little Helga stood once again on the veranda, but all the torches outside were extinguished and the lights in the banqueting hall were out too; the storks were gone; no guests were to be seen; no bridegroom—all had vanished in those short three minutes.

A great dread seized upon Helga; she walked

through the great empty hall into the next chamber where strange warriors were sleeping. She opened a side door which led into her own room, but she found herself in a garden, which had never been there before. Red gleams were in the sky, dawn was approaching. Only three minutes in Heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away.

Then she saw the storks; she called to them in her own language. Father stork turned his head, listened, and came up to her.

"You speak our language," he said. "What do you want? Why do you come here, you strange woman?"

"It is I; it is Helga; don't you know me? We were talking to each other in the veranda three minutes ago."

"That is a mistake," said the stork; "you must have dreamt it."

"No, no," she said, and she reminded him of the Viking's stronghold, and the Wild Bog, and their journey together.

Father stork blinked his eyes and said, "Why, that is a very old story; I believe it happened in the time of my great-great-grandmother. Yes, there certainly was a princess in Egypt who came

from the Danish land, but she disappeared on her wedding night many hundred years ago. You may read all about it here, on the monument in the garden. There are both storks and swans carved on it, and you are at the top yourself, all in white marble."

And so it was; Helga understood all about it now and sank upon her knees.

The sun burst forth, and as, in former times, the frog's skin had fallen away before his beams and revealed the beautiful girl; so now, in the baptism of light, a vision of beauty, brighter and purer than the air—a ray of light—rose to the Father. The earthly body dropped away in dust —only a withered lotus flower lay where she had stood.

"Well, that is a new ending to the story," said father stork; "I hadn't expected that, but I like it very well."

"What will the young ones say about it?" asked mother stork.

"Ah, that is a very important matter," said father stork.

THE BELL

IN the evening, at sunset, when glimpses of golden clouds could just be seen among the chimney pots, a curious sound would be heard, first by one person, then by another; it was like a church bell, but it only lasted a moment because of the rumble of vehicles and the street cries.

"There is the evening bell," people would say; "the sun is setting."

Those who went outside the town where the houses were more scattered, each with its garden or little meadow saw the evening star, and heard the tones of the bell much better. It seemed as if the sound came from a church buried in silent, fragrant woods, and people looked in that direction, feeling quite solemn.

Time passed, and still people said one to the other, "Can there be a church in the woods! that bell has such a wonderfully sweet sound; shall we go and look at it closer?" The rich people drove and the poor ones walked, but it was a very long way; when they reached a group of willows which

THE poor boy had reached the same goal just as soon by his own road.

grew on the outskirts of the wood, they sat down and looked up among the long branches, thinking that they were really in the heart of the forest. A confectioner from the town came out and pitched a tent there, and then another confectioner, and he hung a bell up over his tent. This bell was tarred so as to stand the rain, and the clapper was wanting. When people went home again they said it had been so romantic, and that meant something beyond mere tea. Three persons protested that they had penetrated right through the forest to the other side, and that they had heard the same curious bell all the time, but that then it sounded as if it came from the town.

One of them wrote a poem about it, and said that it sounded like a mother's voice to a beloved child; no melody could be sweeter than the chimes of this bell.

The Emperor's attention was also drawn to it, and he promised that any one who really discovered where the sound came from should receive the title of "the world's bell-ringer," even if there were no bell at all.

A great many people went into the woods for the sake of earning an honest penny, but only

one of them brought home any kind of explanation. No one had been far enough, not even he himself, but he said that the sound of the bell came from a very big owl in a hollow tree; it was a wise owl, which perpetually beat its head against a tree, but whether the sound came from its head or from the hollow tree he could not say with any certainty. All the same he was appointed "world's bell-ringer," and every year he wrote a little treatise on the owl, but nobody was much the wiser for it.

Now on a certain Confirmation day the priest had preached a very moving sermon; all the young people about to be confirmed had been much touched by it; it was a very important day for them. They were leaving childhood behind and becoming grown-up persons; the child's soul was, as it were, to be transformed into that of a responsible being. It was a beautiful sunny day, and after the Confirmation the young people walked out of the town and they heard the sound of the unknown bell more than usually loud coming from the wood. On hearing it they all felt anxious to go further and see it; all except three. The first of these had to go home to try on her ball-dress; it was this very dress and

this very ball which were the reason of her having been confirmed this time; otherwise it would have been put off. The second was a poor boy, who had borrowed his tail-coat and boots of the landlord's son, and he had to return them at the appointed time. The third said that he had never been anywhere without his parents, that he had always been a good child and he meant to continue so, although he was confirmed; nobody ought to have made fun of this resolve, but he did not escape being laughed at.

So these three did not go; the others trudged off. The sun shone and the birds sang, and the newly-confirmed young people took each other by the hand and sang with them; they had not yet received any position in life; they were all equal in the eye of the Lord on the day of their Confirmation. Soon two of the smallest ones got tired and they returned to town; two little girls sat down and made wreaths, so they did not go either. When the others reached the willows where the confectioners had their tents, they said, "Now, then, here we are; the bell doesn't exist, it is only something people imagine!"

Just then the bell was heard in the wood, with its deep rich notes; and four or five of them de-

cided after all to penetrate further into the wood. The underwood was so thick and close that it was quite difficult to advance. Convolvulus and brambles hung in long garlands from tree to tree, where the nightingales sang and the sunbeams played. It was deliciously peaceful, but there was no path for the girls, their clothes would have been torn to shreds. There were great boulders overgrown with many-colored mosses, and fresh springs trickled among them with a curious little gurgling sound.

"Surely that cannot be the bell!" said one of the young people, as he lay down to listen.

"This must be thoroughly looked into." So he stayed behind and let the others go on.

They came to a little hut made of bark, and branches overhung by a crab-apple, as if it wanted to shake all its bloom over the roof, which was covered with roses. The long sprays clustered round the gable, and on it hung a little bell. Could this be the one they sought? Yes, they were all agreed that it must be, except one; he said it was far too small and delicate to be heard so far away as they had heard it, and that the tones which moved all hearts were quite different from these. He who spoke was a king's son, and

so the others said, "That kind of fellow must always be wiser than any one else."

So they let him go on alone, and as he went he was more and more overcome by the solitude of the wood; but he still heard the little bell with which the others were so pleased, and now and then when the wind came from the direction of the confectioners he could hear demands for tea.

But the deep-toned bell sounded above them all, and it seemed as if there was an organ playing with it, and the sounds came from the left, where the heart is placed.

There was a rustling among the bushes, and a little boy stood before the king's son; he had wooden shoes on, and such a small jacket that the sleeves did not cover his wrists. They knew each other, for he was the boy who had had to go back to return the coat and the boots to the landlord's son. He had done this, changed back into his shabby clothes and wooden shoes, and then, drawn by the deep notes of the bell, had returned to the wood again.

"Then we can go together," said the king's son.

But the poor boy in the wooden shoes was too bashful. He pulled down his short sleeves, and

said he was afraid he could not walk quickly enough, besides which he thought the bell ought to be looked for on the right, because that side looked the most beautiful.

"Then we shan't meet at all," said the king's son, nodding to the poor boy, who went into the thickest and darkest part of the wood, where the thorns tore his shabby clothes and scratched his face, hands, and feet till they bled. The king's son got some good scratches too, but he at least had the sun shining upon his path. We are going to follow him, for he is a bright fellow.

"I must and will find the bell," said he, "if I have to go to the end of the world."

Some horrid monkeys sat up in the trees grinning and showing their teeth.

"Shall we pelt him?" said they. "Shall we thrash him? He is a king's son."

But he went confidently on further and further into the wood, where the most extraordinary flowers grew. There were white star-like lilies with blood-red stamens, pale blue tulips which glistened in the sun, and apple-trees on which the apples looked like great shining soap-bubbles. You may fancy how these trees glittered in the sun. Round about were beautiful green mead-

ows, where stags and hinds gamboled under the spreading oaks and beeches. Mosses and creepers grew in the fissures where the bark of the trees was broken away. There were also great glades with quiet lakes, where white swans swam about flapping their wings. The king's son often stopped and listened, for he sometimes fancied that the bell sounded from one of these lakes; but then again he felt sure that it was not there, but further in the wood.

Now the sun began to go down, and the clouds were fiery red; a great stillness came over the wood, and he sank upon his knees, sang his evening psalm, and said, "Never shall I find what I seek, now the sun is going down, the night is coming on—the dark night; perhaps I could catch one more glimpse of the round, red sun before it sinks beneath the earth. I will climb up onto those rocks; they are as high as the trees."

He seized the roots and creepers, and climbed up the slippery stones where the water-snakes wriggled and the toads seemed to croak at him; but he reached the top before the sun disappeared. Seen from this height, oh! what splendor lay before him! The ocean, the wide, beautiful ocean, its long waves rolling towards the

shore. The sun still stood like a great shining altar, out there where sea and sky met. Everything melted away into glowing colors; the wood sang, the ocean sang, and his heart sang with them. All Nature was like a vast holy temple, where trees and floating clouds were as pillars, flowers and grass the woven tapestry, and the heaven itself a great dome. The red colors vanished as the sun went down, but millions of stars peeped out; they were like countless diamond lamps, and the king's son spread out his arms towards heaven, sea, and forest. At that moment, from the right-hand path came the poor boy with the short sleeves and wooden shoes. He had reached the same goal just as soon by his own road. They ran towards each other, and clasped each other's hands in that great temple of Nature and Poetry, and above them sounded the invisible holy bell; happy spirits floated round it to the strains of a joyous Hallelujah.

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SWEEP

HAVE you ever seen an old wooden cupboard quite black with age, and ornamented with carved foliage and curious figures? Well, just such a cupboard stood in a parlor, and had been left to the family as a legacy by the great-grandmother. It was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips; the most curious scrolls were drawn upon it, and out of them peeped little stags' heads, with antlers. In the middle of the cupboard door was the carved figure of a man most ridiculous to look at. He grinned at you, for no one could call it laughing. He had goat's legs, little horns on his head, and a long beard; the children in the room always called him "Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs." It was certainly a very difficult name to pronounce, and there are very few who ever receive such a title, but then it seemed wonderful how he came to be carved at all; yet there he was, always looking at the table under the looking-glass, where stood a very

pretty little shepherdess, made of china. Her shoes were gilt, and her dress had a red rose for an ornament. She wore a hat, and carried a crook, that were both gilded, and looked very bright and pretty. Close by her side stood a little chimney-sweeper, as black as a coal, and also made of china. He was, however, quite as clean and neat as any other china figure; he only represented a black chimney-sweeper, and the china workers might just as well have made him a prince, had they felt inclined to do so. He stood holding his ladder quite handily, and his face was as fair and rosy as a girl's; indeed, that was rather a mistake, it should have had some black marks on it. He and the shepherdess had been placed close together, side by side; and, being so placed, they became engaged to each other, for they were very well suited, being both made of the same sort of china, and being equally fragile. Close to them stood another figure, three times as large as they were, and also made of china. He was an old Chinaman, who could nod his head, and used to pretend that he was the grandfather of the shepherdess, although he could not prove it. He, however, assumed authority over her, and therefore when "Major-general-field-ser-

AT last they reached the top of the chimney and sat themselves down, for they were very tired.

geant-commander Billy-goat's-legs" asked for the little shepherdess to be his wife, he nodded his head to show that he consented. "You will have a husband," said the old Chinaman to her, "who I really believe is made of mahogany. He will make you the lady of Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs. He has the whole cupboard full of silver plate, which he keeps locked up in secret drawers."

"I won't go into the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess. "I have heard that he has eleven china wives there already."

"Then you shall be the twelfth," said the old Chinaman. "To-night as soon as you hear a rattling in the old cupboard, you shall be married, as true as I am a Chinaman"; and then he bobbed his head and fell asleep.

Then the little shepherdess cried, and looked at her sweetheart, the china chimney-sweeper. "I must entreat you," said she, "to go out with me into the wide world, for we cannot stay here."

"I will do whatever you wish," said the little chimney-sweeper; "let us go immediately: I think I shall be able to maintain you with my profession."

"If we were but safely down from the table!"

said she; "I shall not be happy till we are really out in the world."

Then he comforted her and showed her how to place her little foot on the carved edge and gilt-leaf ornaments of the table. He brought his little ladder to help her, and so they contrived to reach the floor. But when they looked at the old cupboard, they saw it was all in an uproar. The carved stags pushed out their heads, raised their antlers, and twisted their necks. The major-general sprung up in the air, and cried out to the old Chinaman, "They are running away! they are running away!" The two were rather frightened at this, so they jumped into the drawer of the window-seat. Here were three or four packs of cards not quite complete, and a doll's theater, which had been built up very neatly. A comedy was being performed in it, and all the queens of diamonds, clubs, and hearts, and spades, sat in the first row fanning themselves with tulips, and behind them stood all the knaves, showing that they had heads above and below as playing cards generally have. The play was about two lovers, who were not allowed to marry, and the shepherdess wept because it was so like her own story. "I cannot bear it,"

said she, "I must get out of the drawer;" but when they reached the floor, and cast their eyes on the table, there was the old Chinaman awake and shaking his whole body, till all at once down he came on the floor, "plump." "The old Chinaman is coming," cried the little shepherdess in a fright, and down she fell on one knee.

"I have thought of something," said the chimney-sweeper; "let us get into the great pot-pourri jar which stands in the corner; there we can lie on rose-leaves and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes near us."

"No, that will never do," said she, "because I know that the Chinaman and the pot-pourri jar were lovers once, and there always remains behind a feeling of good-will between those who have been so intimate as that. No, there is nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage enough to go out into the wide world with me?" said the chimney-sweeper; "have you thought how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?"

"Yes, I have," she replied.

When the chimney-sweeper saw that she was quite firm, he said, "My way is through the stove and up the chimney. Have you courage to creep

with me through the fire-box, and the iron pipe? When we get to the chimney I shall know how to manage very well. We shall soon climb too high for any one to reach us, and we shall come through a hole in the top out into the wide world." So he led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks very dark," said she; still she went in with him through the stove and through the pipe, where it was as dark as pitch.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, there is a beautiful star shining above it." It was a real star shining down upon them as if it would show them the way. So they clambered and crept on, and a frightfully steep place it was; but the chimney-sweeper helped her and supported her, till they got higher and higher. He showed her the best places on which to set her little china foot, so at last they reached the top of the chimney, and sat themselves down, for they were very tired, as may be supposed. The sky, with all its stars, was over their heads, and below were the roofs of the town. They could see for a very long distance out into the wide world, and the poor little shepherdess leaned her head on her chimney-sweeper's shoulder, and wept till she washed the gilt off her sash; the

world was so different to what she expected. "This is too much," she said; "I cannot bear it, the world is too large. Oh, I wish I were safe back on the table again, under the looking-glass; I shall never be happy till I am safe back again. Now I have followed you out into the wide world, you will take me back, if you love me."

Then the chimney-sweeper tried to reason with her, and spoke of the old Chinaman, and of the Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs; but she sobbed so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney-sweeper till he was obliged to do all she asked, foolish as it was. And so, with a great deal of trouble, they climbed down the chimney, and then crept through the pipe and stove, which were certainly not very pleasant places. Then they stood in the dark fire-box, and listened behind the door, to hear what was going on in the room. As it was all quiet, they peeped out. Alas! there lay the old Chinaman on the floor; he had fallen down from the table as he attempted to run after them, and was broken into three pieces; his back had separated entirely, and his head had rolled into a corner of the room. The major-general stood in his old place, and appeared lost in thought.

"This is terrible," said the little shepherdess. "My poor old grandfather is broken to pieces, and it is our fault. I shall never live after this;" and she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted," said the chimney-sweeper; "he can be riveted. Do not be so hasty. If they cement his back, and put a good rivet in it, he will be as good as new, and be able to say as many disagreeable things to us as ever."

THE ANGEL

"WHENEVER a good child dies, an angel of God comes down from heaven, takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies with him over all the places which the child has loved during his life. Then he gathers a large handful of flowers, which he carries up to the Almighty, that they may bloom more brightly in heaven than they do on earth. And the Almighty presses the flowers to His heart, but He kisses the flower that pleases Him best, and it receives a voice, and is able to join the song of the chorus of bliss."

These words were spoken by an angel of God, as he carried a dead child up to heaven, and the child listened as if in a dream. Then they passed over well-known spots where the little one had often played, and through beautiful gardens full of lovely flowers.

"Which of these shall we take with us to heaven to be transplanted there?" asked the angel.

Close by grew a slender, beautiful rose-bush,

but some wicked hand had broken the stem, and the half-opened rosebuds hung faded and withered on the trailing branches.

"Poor rose-bush!" said the child; "let us take it with us to heaven, that it may bloom above in God's garden."

The angel took up the rose-bush; then he kissed the child, and the little one half opened his eyes. The angel gathered also some beautiful flowers, as well as a few buttercups and heart's-ease.

"Now we have flowers enough," said the child; but the angel only nodded, he did not fly upward to heaven.

It was night, and quite still in the great town. Here they remained, and the angel hovered over a small, narrow street, in which lay a large heap of straw, ashes, and sweepings from the houses of people who had moved. There lay fragments of plates, pieces of plaster, rags, old hats, and other rubbish not pleasant to see. Amidst all this confusion, the angel pointed to the pieces of a broken flower-pot, and to a lump of earth which had fallen out of it. The earth had been kept from falling to pieces by the roots of a withered flower, which had been thrown amongst the rubbish.

© G.W. J. & CO.

The Angel and the child

"We will take this with us," said the angel; "I will tell you why as we fly along."

And as they flew the angel told the story:

"Down in that narrow lane, in a low cellar, lived a poor sick boy; he had been sick from his childhood, and even in his best days he could just manage to walk up and down the room on crutches once or twice, but no more. During some days in summer the sunbeams would lie on the floor of the cellar for about half an hour. In this spot the poor sick boy would sit warming himself in the sunshine. Then he would say he had been out, yet he knew nothing of the green forest in its spring foliage, till a neighbor's son brought him a green bough from a beech-tree. This he would place over his head, and fancy that he was in the beech-wood while the sun shone, and the birds sang gayly. One spring day the neighbor's boy brought him some field-flowers, and among them was one to which the root still stuck. This he carefully planted in a flower-pot, and placed in a window-seat near his bed. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand, for it grew, put forth fresh shoots, and blossomed every year. It became a splendid flower-garden to the sick boy, and his little treasure upon earth.

He watered it, and cherished it, and took care it should have the benefit of every sunbeam that found its way into the cellar, from the earliest morning ray to the evening sunset. The flower twined itself even in his dreams—for him it bloomed, for him spread its perfume. And it gladdened his eyes, and to the flower he turned, even in death, when the Lord called him. He has been one year with God. During that time the flower has stood in the window, withered and forgotten, till at length cast out among the sweepings into the street. And this poor flower, withered and faded as it is, we have added to our nosegay, because it gave more real joy than the most beautiful flower in the garden of a queen."

"But how do you know all this?" asked the child whom the angel was carrying to heaven.

"I know it," said the angel, "because I myself was the poor sick boy who walked upon crutches, and I know my own flower well."

Then the child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious happy face of the angel, and at the same moment they found themselves in that heavenly home where all is happiness and joy. And God pressed the dead child to His heart, and wings were given him so that he could fly

with the angel, hand in hand. Then the Almighty pressed all the flowers to His heart; but He kissed the withered field-flower, and it received a voice. Then it joined in the song of the angels, who surrounded the throne, some near, and others in a distant circle, but all equally happy. They all joined in the chorus of praise, both great and small—the good, happy child, and the poor field-flower, that once lay withered and cast away on a heap of rubbish in a narrow, dark street.

THE STORKS

A STORK had built his nest on the roof of the last house in a little town. The mother stork was sitting on the nest with her little ones, who stuck out their little black beaks, which had not turned red yet. The father stork stood a little way off on the ridge of the roof, erect and stiff, with one leg drawn up under him, so as at least to be at some trouble while standing sentry. One might have thought he was carved out of wood, he stood so still!

"It will look so grand for my wife to have a sentry on guard by the nest!" he thought. "People won't know that I am her husband. I dare say they think I have orders to stand there —it looks smart!" and so he remained standing on one leg.

A party of children were playing in the street, and when they saw the stork, one of the boldest boys, followed by the others, sang the old song

about the storks, but he sang it just as it came into his head:

"Oh! father stork, father stork, fly to your nest,
Three featherless fledglings await your return.
The first of your chicks shall be stuck through the breast,
The second shall hang and the third shall burn."

"Hark! what are the boys singing?" said the little storks; "they say we are to be hanged and burnt!"

"Don't bother your heads about them!" said the mother stork; "don't listen to them and then it won't do you any harm."

But the boys went on singing and pointing their fingers at the storks; only one boy, whose name was Peter, said that it was a shame to make fun of creatures and he would take no part in it.

The mother bird comforted her little ones, saying, "Do not trouble yourselves about it, look at your father how quietly he stands, and on one leg too!"

"But we are so frightened," said the young ones, burying their heads in the nest.

The next day when the children came back to play and they saw the storks they began their old song:

"The first of your chicks shall be stuck through the breast,
The second shall hang and the third shall burn."

"Are we to be hanged and burnt?" asked the little storks.

"No, certainly not!" said the mother; "you are to learn to fly, see if I don't drill you, then we will go into the fields and visit the frogs; they curtsey in the water to us and sing 'Koax, Koax,' and then we gobble them up; that's a treat if you like!"

"And what next?" asked the young ones.

"Oh, then all the storks in the country assemble for the autumn drill, and you will have to fly your best, for the one who cannot fly will be run through the body by the general's beak, so you must take good care to learn something when the drills begin."

"After all then we may be stuck just as the boys said, and listen, they are singing it again now!"

"Listen to me and not to them," said the mother stork. "After that we shall fly away to the warm countries, ever such a way off, over the woods and mountains. We go to Egypt where they have houses with three-cornered sides, the

points of which reach above the clouds; they are called Pyramids, and they are older than any stork can remember. Then there is a river which overflows its banks and all the land round turns to mud. You walk about in mud catching frogs."

"Oh!" said all the young ones.

"Yes, it is splendid; you do nothing but eat all day; while we are so well off there, there is not a leaf on the trees in this country, and it is so cold that the clouds freeze all to pieces and fall down in little bits."

She meant snow, but did not know how to describe it any better.

"Do the naughty boys freeze to pieces?" asked the young storks.

"No, they don't freeze to pieces, but they come very near to it; you, on the other hand, fly about in strange countries, in the warm sunshine among flowers."

Some time passed and the little ones were big enough to stand up in the nest and look about them. The father stork flew backwards and forwards every day, with nice frogs and little snakes, and every kind of delicacy he could find. It was so funny to see the tricks he did to amuse

them; he would turn his head right round on to his tail, and he would clatter with his beak, as if it was a rattle. And then he told them all the stories he had heard in the swamps.

"Well, now you must learn to fly," said the mother stork one day; and all the young ones had to stand on the ridge of the roof. Oh, how they wobbled about trying to keep their balance with their wings, and how nearly they fell down.

"Now look at me," said the mother; "this is how you must hold your heads! And move your legs so! one, two, one, two, this will help you to get on in the world."

Then she flew a little way, and the young ones made a clumsy little hop, and down they came with a bump, for their bodies were too heavy.

"I don't want to fly," said one of the young ones, creeping down into the nest again. "I don't care about going to the warm countries."

"Do you want to freeze to death here when the winter comes? Shall the boys come and hang or burn or stick you? I will soon call them!"

"No, no," said the young one, hopping out upon the roof again, just like the others.

By the third day they could all fly fairly well; then they thought they could hover in the air,

too, and they tried it, but flop!—they soon found they had to move their wings again.

Then the boys began their song again:

"Oh! father stork, father stork, fly to your nest."

"Shall we fly down and pick their eyes out?" asked the young ones.

"No, leave them alone," said their mother; "only pay attention to me, that is much more important. One, two, three, now we fly to the right; one, two, three, now to the left, and round the chimney! that was good. That last stroke of the wings was so pretty and the flap so well done that I will allow you to go to the swamp with me to-morrow! Several nice storks go there with their children; now just let me see that mine are the nicest. Don't forget to carry your heads high; it looks well, and gives you an air of importance."

"But are we not to have our revenge on the naughty boys?" asked the young storks.

"Let them scream as much as they like; you will fly away with the clouds to the land of the pyramids, while they will perhaps be freezing. There won't be a green leaf or a sweet apple here then!"

"But we *will* have our revenge!" they whispered to each other, and then they began their drilling again.

Of all the boys in the street, not one was worse at making fun of the storks than he who first began the teasing song. He was a tiny little fellow, not more than six years old. It is true, the young storks thought he was at least a hundred, for he was so much bigger than their father and mother, and they had no idea how old children and grown-up people could be. They reserved all their vengeance for the boy who first began to tease them, and who never would leave off. The young storks were frightfully irritated by the teasing, and the older they grew the less they would stand it. At last their mother was obliged to promise that they should have their revenge, but not till the last day before they left.

"We shall first have to see how you behave at the drill. Now let us see!"

"That you shall!" said the young ones; and didn't they take pains? They practiced every day, till they could fly as lightly as any feather; it was quite a pleasure to watch them.

Then came the autumn; all the storks began to assemble, before they started on their flight to

the warm countries, where they spend their winters.

Those were indeed drills! They had to fly over woods and towns, to try their wings, because they had such a long journey before them. The young storks did everything so well that they got no end of frogs and snakes as prizes. They had the best characters, and then they could eat the frogs and snakes afterwards, which you may be sure they did.

"Now we shall have our revenge!" they said.

"Yes, certainly," said the mother stork. "My plan is this, and I think it is the right one! I know the pond where all the little human babies lie, till the storks fetch them, and give them to their parents. The pretty little creatures lie there asleep, dreaming sweet dreams, sweeter than any they ever dream afterwards. Every parent wishes for such a little baby, and every child wants a baby brother or sister. Now we fly to the pond and fetch a little brother or sister for each of those children who did not join in singing that horrid song, or in making fun of the storks. But those who sang it shall not have one and as for the good boy, who said, 'It is a shame to make fun of the creatures,' we will take

both a brother and a sister to him, and because his name is Peter, you shall all be called Peter too."

It happened just as she said, and all the storks are called Peter to this day.

THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER

THERE was once a poor student who lived in a garret. And there was also a huckster to whom the house belonged, and who occupied the ground floor. A goblin lived with the huckster, because at Christmas he always had a large dish full of jam, with a great piece of butter in the middle. The huckster could afford this; and therefore the goblin remained with the huckster, which was very cunning of him.

One evening the student came into the shop to buy candles and cheese. He obtained what he wished, and then the huckster and his wife nodded good-evening to him. The student nodded in return as he turned to leave, then suddenly stopped, and began reading the piece of paper in which the cheese was wrapped. It was a leaf torn out of an old book, one that ought not to have been torn up, for it was full of poetry.

"Yonder lies more of the same sort," said the huckster. "I gave an old woman a few coffee berries for it; you shall have the rest for sixpence, if you will."

"Indeed I will," said the student; "give me the book instead of the cheese; I can eat my bread and butter without cheese. It would be a sin to tear up a book like this. You are a clever man, and a practical man; but you understand no more about poetry than that cask yonder."

This was a very rude speech; especially in regard to the cask; but the huckster and the student both laughed, for it was only said in fun. But the goblin felt very angry that any man should venture to say such things to a huckster who was a householder and sold the best butter. As soon as it was night, and the shop closed, and every one in bed except the student, the goblin stepped softly into the bedroom where the huckster's wife slept, and took away her tongue, which, of course, she did not then want. Whatever object in the room he placed this tongue upon immediately received voice and speech, and was able to express its thoughts and feelings as readily as the lady herself could do. It could only be used by one object at a time, which was a good thing, as a number speaking at once would have caused great confusion. The goblin laid the tongue upon the cask, in which lay a quantity of old newspapers.

"Is it really true," he asked, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Of course I know," replied the cask: "poetry is something that always stands in the corner of a newspaper, and is sometimes cut out; and I may venture to affirm that I have more of it in me than the student has, and I am only a poor tub of the huckster's."

Then the goblin placed the tongue on the coffee mill; and how it did go to be sure! Then he put it on the butter tub and cash box, and they all expressed the same opinion as the waste-paper tub; and a majority must always be respected.

"Now I shall go and tell the student," said the goblin; and with these words he went quietly up the back stairs to the garret where the student lived. He had a candle burning still, and the goblin peeped through the keyhole and saw that he was reading in the torn book, which he had bought at the shop. But how light the room was! From the book shot forth a ray of light which grew broad and full, like the stem of a tree, from which bright rays spread upward and over the student's head. Each leaf was fresh, and each flower was like a beautiful female head;

some with dark and sparkling eyes, and others with eyes that were wonderfully blue and clear. The fruit gleamed like stars, and the room was filled with sounds of beautiful music. The little goblin had never imagined, much less seen or heard of, any sight so glorious as this. He stood still on tiptoe, peeping in, till the light went out in the garret. The student no doubt had blown out his candle and gone to bed; but the little goblin remained standing there nevertheless, and listening to the music which still sounded on, soft and beautiful, a sweet cradle-song for the student, who had lain down to rest.

"This is a wonderful place," said the goblin; "I never expected such a thing. I should like to stay here with the student"; and then the little man thought it over, for he was a sensible little sprite. At last he sighed, "But the student has no jam!" So he went down-stairs again into the huckster's shop, and it was a good thing he got back when he did, for the cask had almost worn out the lady's tongue; he had given a description of all that he contained on one side, and was just about to turn himself over to the other side to describe what was there, when the goblin entered and restored the tongue to the lady. But

from that time forward, the whole shop, from the cash box down to the pinewood logs, formed their opinions from that of the cask; and they all had such confidence in him, and treated him with so much respect, that when the huckster read the criticisms on theatricals and art of an evening, they fancied it must all come from the cask.

But after what he had seen, the goblin could no longer sit and listen quietly to the wise talk down-stairs; so, as soon as the evening light glimmered in the garret, he took courage, for it seemed to him as if the rays of light were strong cables, drawing him up, and obliging him to go and peep through the keyhole; and, while there, a feeling of vastness came over him such as we experience by the ever-moving sea, when the storm breaks forth; and it brought tears into his eyes. He did not himself know why he wept, yet a kind of pleasant feeling mingled with his tears. "How wonderfully glorious it would be to sit with the student under such a tree!" but that was out of the question; he must be content to look through the keyhole, and be thankful for even that.

There he stood on the cold landing, with the autumn wind blowing down upon him through

the trap-door. It was very cold; but the little creature did not really feel it, till the light in the garret went out, and the tones of music died away. Then how he shivered, and crept down-stairs again to his warm corner, where it felt home-like and comfortable. And when Christmas came again, and brought the dish of jam and the great lump of butter, he liked the huckster best of all.

Soon after, in the middle of the night, the goblin was awakened by a terrible noise and knocking against the window shutters and the house doors, and by the sound of the watchman's horn; for a great fire had broken out, and the whole street appeared full of flames. Was it in their house, or a neighbor's? No one could tell, for terror seized upon all. The huckster's wife was so bewildered that she took her gold earrings out of her ears and put them in her pocket, that she might save something at least. The huckster ran to get his business papers, and the servant resolved to save her black silk mantle, which she had managed to buy. Each wished to keep the best things they had. The goblin had the same wish; for, with one spring, he was up-stairs and in the student's room, whom he

found standing by the open window, and looking quite calmly at the fire, which was raging in the house of a neighbor opposite. The goblin caught up the wonderful book which lay on the table, and popped it into his red cap, which he held tightly with both hands. The greatest treasure in the house was saved; and he ran away with it to the roof, and seated himself on the chimney. The flames of the burning house opposite illuminated him as he sat, both hands pressed tightly over his cap, in which the treasure lay; and then he found out what feelings really reigned in his heart, and knew exactly which way they lured him. And yet, when the fire was extinguished, and the goblin again began to reflect, he hesitated, and said at last, "I must divide myself between the two; I cannot quite give up the huckster, because of the jam."

And this is a representation of human nature. We are like the goblin; we all go to visit the huckster "because of the jam."

THE END

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
00025723673